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ABSTRACT

This booklet was designed specifically for the parents of elementary school students in the Fairfax County (Virginia) Public Schools. It forms a part of the support kit developed for the Management for Effective Teaching (MET) project, which offers guidelines for school personnel in meeting the objectives of the school district curriculum Program of Studies. Information contained in this booklet focuses on questions concerning the school system, parent-teacher conferences, testing, home-study activities, and developmental characteristics of children. (JD)

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Home/School Communication:

Suggestions for Parents

School Name _____

FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Department of Instructional Services
Office of Elementary Education

MET
Management for Effective Teaching

SP 020 487

MET

Management for Effective Teaching

We are happy to present the Project MET materials to you. As you know, these materials are copies of the original contents of the Management Support Kit. They are designed to assist teachers, streamline organization, and support current management efforts.

We hope that you find them useful. Should additional assistance be required, please feel free to contact us at Masonville.

Project MET Staff
Pat Harbour, Director

Office of Elementary Education
Department of Instructional Services
Fairfax County Public Schools • Fairfax, Virginia

Management for Effective Teaching

MET

MANAGEMENT SUPPORT KIT

Introduction

Project MET, Management for Effective Teaching, is a federally funded developmental project which will be piloted, with materials field-tested, in Fairfax County Public Schools, during the school year 1982-83. Materials and procedures have been developed to assist with the management of planning, teaching, and record keeping. MET products contained in the Management Support Kit are designed to aid teachers in the effective utilization of time, space, and materials in organizing and planning for instruction. Approximately 400 elementary teachers throughout the school system will use the products from the kit.

The teacher is a manager who plans, coordinates, and directs the classroom, an organizational unit of the school, and thus:

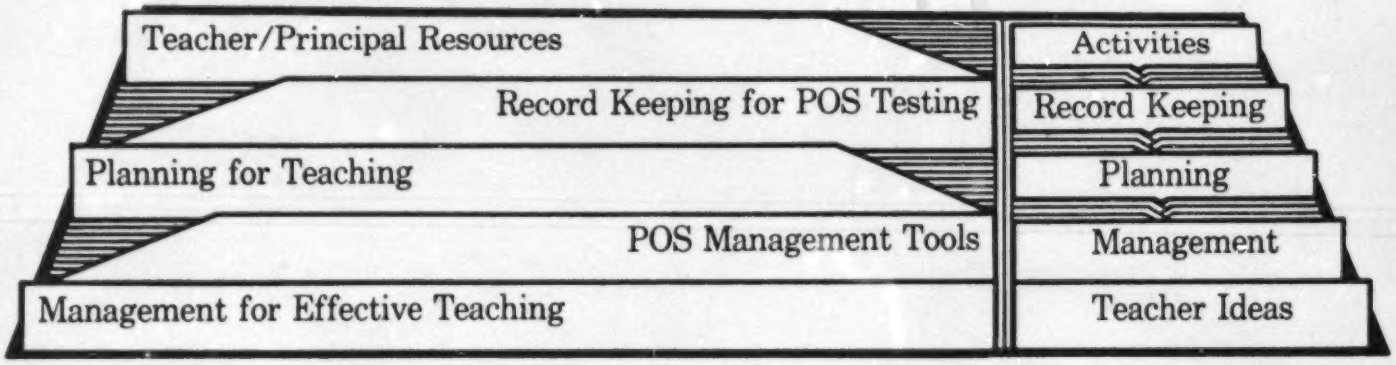
- sets goals and objectives
- ensures that appropriate knowledge and skill mastery levels are attained among students
- creates an environment conducive to the development of positive attitudes toward self and others
- teaches and reinforces positive individual and group behavior
- motivates students to achieve individual and group goals (cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional)
- manages the instructional materials, classroom space, and human resources for a quality learning environment

Research suggests that effective managment in teaching enhances the instructional program and ultimately may improve student achievement. The purpose of Project MET is to provide an opportunity for teachers to determine the extent to which this is true. Teachers will field-test the procedures, process models, and materials contained in the Management Support Kit.

During the 1982-83 school year, teachers will be asked to respond to a survey that assesses the contents of the kit. The survey will allow teachers to determine the utility and validity of the products. The participation and cooperation of each teacher using the kit and responding to the survey will be important to instructional management in Fairfax County Public Schools. Since the project is a pilot program, the results reported by teachers who have used the MET materials may have implications for instructional management throughout the state of Virginia. The time and energy of each participant will be greatly valued and appreciated.

MET

Management for Effective Teaching (MET) is a pilot project funded under Title IV-C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The project was planned and implemented to answer the need expressed by teachers, principals and other educational personnel for resources to manage more effectively the Fairfax County Public Schools' Program of Studies.



What MET Is...

It is a management support kit of resources, materials and information designed to assist classroom teachers (K-6) in planning, managing and implementing the Fairfax County Public Schools' Program of Studies.

Approximately four hundred Fairfax County Public School teachers will field test and assess the products during the 1982-83 school year. The results from field testing the Management Support Kit will contribute to ideas for the development of a divisionwide instructional management system.

What MET Includes...

- a coding system for the mathematics Program of Studies
- a planning process for the first nine weeks of school, and daily/weekly and long-range models
- a record keeping system for the mathematics Program of Studies and accessment resources (Program of Studies tests) for managing the diagnostic prescriptive teaching process
- a chart which identifies and matches the Program of Studies items with specific mathematics skills
- a sample letter to parents to convey purposes of the Program of Studies testing and the manner in which to interpret test results
- a teacher plan book designed, piloted and revised by teachers
- a set of supplementary and adaptable teaching ideas
- a principal's checklist for opening and closing school

How MET Works...

It incorporates good management practice into the instructional program.

It organizes teaching strategies.

It coordinates teaching materials and diagnostic resources with the Program of Studies.

For Additional Information about Project MET
(Management for Effective Teaching), contact:

Patricia Moore Harbour, Ed.D.
Department of Instructional Services
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Annandale, VA 22003

INTRODUCTION

WE KNOW THAT

You, the parents, are the most important

people in the lives of your children.

Your child's initial learning experiences take place in the home with you as the first teacher. As your child's world grows and expands, others play a role in learning. We, the school, meet your child at an early age and share your concern for the very best learning experiences possible. It is logical that we should develop a cooperative partnership with you. In an effort to further the alliance between home and school, we want to share with you some suggestions which support and enhance your role as the major influence in your child's education and development.

In Suggestions for Parents, we have tried to anticipate and respond to some of the questions parents most frequently ask the teacher or principal. The information contained in this booklet focuses on questions concerning the school system, conferences with your child's teacher, testing, home-study activities, and developmental characteristics of children. This document has been developed by Project MET, Department of Instructional Services, Fairfax County Public Schools, Fairfax, Virginia.

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SECTION I

WHAT INFORMATION DO I NEED AS A PARENT OF A STUDENT WHO ATTENDS THE FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

As a parent of a student in the Fairfax County Public Schools you probably would like to know certain general facts about your school system.

The School System

- The Division Superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools is William J. Burkholder.

- A ten-member School Board is appointed by the elected County Board of Supervisors. Agendas and summaries of Board actions are available upon request (telephone 691-2291). The primary function of the School Board is to shape the education of the students and guide the operation of the schools. Written policies of the Board, as well as regulations and notices, are placed in the Policies, Bylaws, and Regulations.

- The school system is divided into four geographic areas with approximately 40 schools in each. Each area has a superintendent and staff who assist schools, helping to identify and solve problems, in addition to improving instructional programs.

Area I:	Superintendent:	Doris Torrice
Area II:	Superintendent:	Donald Lacey
Area III:	Superintendent:	Dr. Herman A. Howard
Area IV:	Superintendent:	Dr. Arthur W. Gosling

- Fairfax County Public Schools, the nation's eleventh largest school system, projects enrollment for 1982-83 at about 122,280 pre-school through grade 12, in 163 schools (120 elementary, K-6; 20 intermediate, 7-8; 20 high, 9-12; 3 secondary, 7-12) and 19 special services centers. There are 7,200 teachers included in the school system's staff of 13,000.

- The pupil-teacher ratio is as follows: kindergarten, 25 to 1; grades 1-3, 24 to 1; grades 4-6, 28 to 1. The average cost of educating a student is $3,132.

- The school system operates one of the nation's largest school bus fleets, consisting of more than 700 buses which transport about 80,000 students to and from school each school day. Bus transportation is provided for elementary school students who live more than one mile from school and for students who would have to use hazardous routes.

- The school system has one of the largest and most versatile volunteer programs in the country. Citizens are urged to participate in this program. Information may be obtained at the nearest school.

The Instructional Program

- The instructional program for Fairfax County Public Schools is the Program of Studies, (POS). The POS is the Fairfax County Public School curriculum. It contains the instructional objectives for all subjects at each grade level.

  Parents are invited to review the Program of Studies materials, which are available at each school. Also, parents may purchase those sections of the POS which may be of special interest by calling the Masonville Instructional Center, 698-7500.

- Textbooks are provided free of charge to all students. Students may be charged fees for musical instrument repair, loss of or damage to School Board property, transcripts of student records, enrichment materials, and certain extracurricular activities such as athletic events, plays, and field trips.

Special Education Programs

- Fairfax County Public Schools special education programs, among the best in the country, meet the Virginia state mandate and federal law for providing an educational program for each handicapped youngster between the ages of 2 and 21. Programs are offered for the visually impaired, hearing-impaired, speech- and language-impaired, learning-disabled, physically handicapped, emotionally disturbed, autistic, multiple-handicapped, mildly retarded, and moderately retarded. Additionally, there is a non-categorical program for preschool handicapped children. Contract services for children who cannot be accommodated in available public programs are provided at state-approved private schools. For further information, call 691-2473.

- Two types of programs are available for gifted and talented students. Center programs for the highly academically gifted are available at selected elementary and intermediate schools. Local school-based programs for identified gifted and talented students, grades three through eight, are available at all elementary and intermediate schools. For a brochure and further information, call 698-0172, your local school, or your area office.

School Hours

- Daily school hours are 5 1/2 hours plus a lunch period for grades 1-12, and 3 hours for kindergarten. Elementary schools close early on Mondays in order to provide time for staff development, curriculum development, and teacher conferences with parents and students.

- Inclement weather may result in school closings, delayed openings, or early dismissals. Radio and television stations carry this news as soon as such decisions are made. Parents and students are urged not to call local schools or administrative offices for this information. Working parents should be certain that their children know where to go in the event of early closing.

- Before-school, after-kindergarten, and after-school day care is provided in certain elementary schools. For more information, call the Fairfax County Office for Children, 691-3175.

School Lunch

- Nutritious lunches are served in every school, with 900 food service employees serving about 57,000 hot lunches each day. Milk, ice cream, and selected foods are available for purchase on an a la carte basis. Some schools have breakfast programs. Snacks are provided to kindergarten students for a fee. Parents can call 691-2294 to find out that day's menu.

Human Relations

- No student or employee in the Fairfax County Public Schools shall, on the basis of age, sex, race, religion, national origin, marital status, or handicapping condition, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any education program or activity. The Office of Human Relations (750-0150) will receive questions and try to resolve problems concerning equal opportunity for students or employees.

County and Community Services

- The Fairfax County Recreation and Community Services Department conducts classes and programs at many schools and on school grounds after school hours, on weekends, and during vacation periods. For more information call 691-3291.

- The Fairfax County Health Department provides health screening and nursing services in the schools. Many types of Health Department clinical services are open to the general public, and all immunizations required for school may be obtained free of charge. For more information call 691-2432.

General Information

- For general information about the school system, call the Office of Community Relations, 691-2291.

Parent Notes

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SECTION II

HOW SHOULD I PREPARE FOR THE PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE?

WHAT KINDS OF QUESTIONS SHOULD I ASK?

Some Suggestions for

Parent/Teacher Conferences

- Prepare questions for the teacher prior to the conference and take them with you.

- Exchange information with the teacher on child's behavior at home and at school.

- Ask for clear explanations of terms, abbreviations, forms, ideas, or courses of study.

- Plan to keep in touch with the teacher on a regular basis during the year.

- Ask questions about the grading system and the report card. Learn the standards and expectations the teacher has for your child.

- Ask to see the Fairfax County Public Schools' Program of Studies (POS) curriculum, and review the instructional objectives for your child's grade. Be sure you understand the POS test system and how the teacher uses it.

- Ask if your child could sit in on a short informal conference in order for him or her to understand that you and the teacher are working together to make learning a happy experience.

If your schedule permits, volunteer your time, special skills, or knowledge to the teacher or principal. Fairfax County schools welcome help.

Some General Questions for the Parent's

Use During Parent/Teacher Conferences

- What is your assessment of my child's performance?
- How has my child progressed since the last reporting period?
- What can we do to improve my child's progress?
- What is my child's instructional level in math and reading? How does this correspond with his or her grade placement?
- When an assignment is given, does my child usually:

  ___ begin right away?

  ___ start slowly, but completes within expected time?

  ___ start slowly and not complete assignments?

  ___ finish work quickly, then uses time wisely?

  ___ finish work quickly, but not accurately?

  ___ other

- How does my child work independently?
- How does my child relate to his/her peers?
- How does my child react to unexpected changes during the school day?
- Does my child seem to have a positive self-image?
- What are some specific strengths and/or weaknesses of my child?
- Are there things going on that I should know about (early warning signals)?

Other additional questions I have:

The above material was adapted from
Reporting to Parents, A Handbook for Teachers K-6, September, 1977,
Fairfax County Public Schools.

SECTION III

WHAT DOES TESTING ACCOMPLISH?

WHAT TESTS ARE GIVEN?

WHICH TESTS ARE REQUIRED?

Answers to Testing Questions

Testing can be used to improve the instruction your child receives. Both school personnel and parents need to understand how tests are used, and what they measure.

Tests can best be used to assist teachers in diagnosing learning needs. Tests are also one way--though not necessarily the most important one--of measuring student achievement. Testing can provide useful information, however, it provides only part of the information that is needed to make sound educational decisions. Teachers, administrators, and parents need also to look at the quality of written work, student participation in class discussions, teacher-assigned grades, and the student's application of what has been learned.

The tests students are most often given are teacher-made or commercially prepared tests which assess progress in instruction that has occurred. Teacher-made tests provide one way of looking at your child's progress in school. Norm-referenced tests and criterion-referenced tests are the two other types of achievement tests that are used. These tests provide additional information that can help to guide instruction. These two types of tests have different designs and purposes.

Norm-referenced tests (sometimes called standardized tests) are designed to compare what your children have learned about a subject like reading or math with what other students have learned about those same subjects. Norm-referenced tests, such as the SRA, usually cover material taught in most schools in subjects like reading, language arts, math, science, and social studies. They do not necessarily test precisely what your child is learning in his or her Fairfax County classroom.

Norm-referenced tests have this name because they compare an individual's performance with that of a group, called a norm group. The norm group is comprised of students from all kinds of schools at the same grade level from all parts of the country. Once a norm-referenced test is developed, it is given to a large national sample. Results of the norm group's tests are analyzed and ranked.

In FCPS, the most widely used norm-referenced tests are the "SRA tests," developed by Science Research Associates, Inc. These tests are selected by the Virginia Department of Education, and are required for students in grades 4, 8, and 11. In Fairfax County, students in grade 6 also take the SRA tests.

Criterion-referenced tests such as Program of Studies tests, give specific information about what a student has or has not learned about specified skills or objectives. A criterion-referenced test can tell you specifically whether your child can, for example, use zeros correctly in multiplication or identify the main idea in a story.

The POS tests were developed by Fairfax County Public Schools teachers, curriculum specialists, and testing personnel, to measure selected objectives from the Fairfax County curriculum, Program of Studies. They are currently available for objectives in math (grades 3-8) and reading (grades 2-7). Administering POS tests at the elementary school level meets the state requirement to use at least annually, criterion-referenced tests in reading and math with students in grades 1-6.

There are other tests your child might take if he or she is being considered for a special FCPS program. Teachers regularly give informal and teacher-made tests to ensure students have mastered certain skills.

Countywide administration of several tests is required each year by the Virginia Department of Education or the Fairfax County School Board, as follows:

	Grade(s)	Test Dates	Results Available	Source of Requirement
NORM-REFERENCED TESTS				
• Metropolitan Readiness Tests (MRT) measure skills necessary for success in beginning reading and mathematics	K	Spring		County
• SRA Achievement/Educational Ability Series (SRA) Measure basic skills; provide information on educational development in broad content areas and give an estimate of educational ability.	4,6,8,11	Spring		State/ County
CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS				
• Virginia Basic Learning Skills Tests (BLS) Reading Mathematics measure state-adopted minimum skills; provide information on the mastery of each objective tested.	 1 1&2	 Varies by School	 Shortly after testing	 State
• Program of Studes (POS) Tests: Reading Mathematics measure selected county-adopted objectives; provide information on the mastery of each objective tested.	 2-7 3-8	 Varies by School	 Two to four weeks after testing	 State/ County

Suggested Questions on Testing

for your Child's Teacher or Principal

- What skills will my child be expected to learn this year?
- How will you evaluate my child's progress this year? How do you use teacher-made tests and standardized tests to evaluate my child's progress?

  What are some other ways you evaluate progress?
- Do the tests you use (e.g., POS, SRA) measure what you teach?
- What skills or attitudes are not measured by these tests?
- How often do you test my child to find out what he or she has learned?
- What do the test scores mean? Are the results consistent with my child's classroom performance? If not, what factors are contributing to this difference? Should I be concerned about a discrepancy between test scores and classroom performance?
- Is this school doing anything to give students practice in taking tests?

How to Help Your Child Do Better on Tests

- Try not to be overly anxious about test scores. Too much emphasis can be upsetting to children.
- Give your child encouragement. Praise your child for doing his or her best.
- Don't judge your child on the basis of a test score. Test scores are not perfect measures of what your son or daughter can do; many skills and abilities cannot be measured by paper-and-pencil tests.
- Ask the teacher to suggest activities for you to do with your child at home that will help prepare for tests.
- To the extent possible, make sure your child attends school regularly and completes assigned homework.
- To the extent possible, make sure your child is well rested and alert on school days, especially on test days.
- Provide a good learning environment at home--a place to study, plus a variety of books and magazines to read.

Additional Information

- A good free publication is "Your Child and Testing," by Enid B. Herndon, published by the National Institute of Education. It is available from Consumer Information Center, Dept. 520J, Pueblo, Colorado, 81009.

- Your questions on tests can be answered by your child's teachers and counselors, and the school principal. They may refer you to the area office, or to the Office of Research and Evaluation (960-6000), the office which prepared the special edition of Familygram on testing (spring 1982) from which the above material was adapted.

Additional Test Questions

SECTION IV

WHAT HOME ACTIVITIES ENCOURAGE

AN ATMOSPHERE THAT PROMOTES LEARNING?

Suggestions for

Home/Study Activities

Some Activities for the Primary Child

- Encourage your child to look at magazines, newspapers, and books at home.
- Let your child see you reading as often as possible.
- Read to your child and talk about the stories and pictures.
- Provide books related to your child's interests and at his or her reading level.
- Use television to interest your child in reading about new things.
- Help your child to read by giving encouragement and being actively involved.
- Praise your child when he or she reads to you.
- Be patient as your child learns to read.
- Assist your child in making booklets on topics of interest.
- Teach your child to care for reading materials.
- Provide a place for your child's reading materials.
- Help your child get a library card and check out books.
- Help your child to read signs and labels such as:

food labels	highway signs
store names	house numbers
license plates	

- Ask your child questions about a story.
  - Who is in the story?
  - What happened first?
  - What else happened?
  - Why did it happen?
  - Where did it happen?
  - When did it happen?
- Help your child to select parts of a story which are humorous, exciting, happy, or sad.

- Read part of a story, and discuss possible endings. Then ask your child to complete the story to find out what really happened.

- Ask your child to illustrate a story with a painting, dramatization, pantomime, or puppet show.

- Ask your child to read and say rhymes and jingles appropriate to certain happenings and situations. Through repeated readings, a child will often memorize them.

  - Read many rhymes, stressing words that rhyme--

    Mary, Mary
    Quite contrary

  - Encourage your child to complete rhymes--

    Jack and Jill
    Went up the _____

  - Encourage your child to give reasons for liking or disliking poems.

- Help your child follow directions:

  - Plan a treasure hunt. Give each child a slip of paper which tells in simple, written directions how to find part of the treasure. Draw a picture for children who are not yet reading. Give a direction for each part of the treasure until the complete treasure is found.

  - Write labels for different things around the house, such as door, window, table. Assist your child in matching words with objects.

- Using newspapers, ask your child to do the following:

  - Tell or write a story about a picture.

  - Cut out three or more pictures, put in a sequence, and tell a story about the pictures.

  - Cut out pictures and sort them by groups such as food, clothing, shelter.

  - Find pictures of things that begin with the same sound; for example, book, box, bag, ball.

  - Find phrases and words. Cut them out and make sentences.

  - Write the name of a color and find several pictures having that color; write the names of other colors and find several pictures for each color.

  - Cut comic strips apart; then put them back in order.

Ask your child to do some primary mathematic activities:

- Count items around the house, i.e., How many doors? How many windows?
- Set the table by counting out plates and napkins.
- Make a counting booklet - cut pictures from magazines and paste one object on page 1, two on page 2, and so on.
- Point to numbers on a calendar, and say them as you point. Point to first day, second day, and so on. Point to first week, second week, and so on.
- Use toothpicks, straws, or new pencils to measure how long things are; ask "How many toothpicks long?" or, if two things have been mastered, "Which is shorter?" or "which is longer?"
- Read recipes letting your child assist and help measure ingredients.
- Observe changes on a real thermometer. Compare the inside temperature with the outside temperature.
- Make a paper plate clock.
- Keep a family calendar noting holidays, birthdays, or family outings.
- Talk about coin values and play store with old cartons, bottles, and boxes.
- Make a number line by marking off equal spaces on a strip of paper. Place numbers under each mark to indicate what number the mark represents.
- Chart the growth of a plant, scores in a game, daily temperature.
- Using paper squares, make a graph showing the heights of persons in your family.
- Use blocks to show addition and subtraction. For example, place two blocks in a row. Then add three more blocks to the row. Ask, "What is two plus three?" Place five blocks in a row. Remove three blocks. Ask, "What is five minus three?"
- Illustrate the action of a number story with cutouts. For example:

  Three birds were sitting on the fence. One more bird came to join them. Then there were _____birds.

  Six birds were sitting on the fence. Four birds flew away. Then there were _____ birds.

Some Activities for the Elementary School Child

NOTE TO PARENTS:

> You can build upon school social studies programs by responding to your children's natural curiosity about the world. "Social studies" is a term used to describe the study of people, places, and periods of history through interrelating history, geography, government, economics, and sociology. Through social studies your child becomes more aware of the world and his or her place in it. Your child begins to understand people, how and where they live, and why they live as they do.
>
> You can help your children feel they are citizens of the community, state, nation, and world by discussing the news with them, by taking them to visit interesting places, and by attending special events with them. Visit some of the many interesting places in Fairfax County, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and the neighboring states.

Parents may wish to encourage children to do some of the following activities:

- Make a list of places in the news; then find out all you can about one of the places you would like to visit. See if there are any books or magazines in your home that can give you more information. Then pretend that a television station has sent you to that place. Ask your family to be the audience for your special report.

- Choose an interesting person in the news. For one week follow all the news you can about that person. Make notes on what the person says. Draw several cartoons to show what the person is saying or doing and what the person may be thinking. How are the cartoons alike? How are they different? Discuss your observations.

- Make a travel collage. You may collect some of the following items by writing for information, by going on a trip, or by clipping information from newspapers and magazines.

Magazine articles and pictures	Samples
Newspaper articles and pictures	Ticket stubs
Postcards	Souvenirs
Stamps	Souvenir stickers
Photographs	Letters
Dried flowers and plants	Brochures

- Pretend you are advertising your community, county, state, or nation. You want to attract people to visit or live there. What information or photographs would you put on the poster? Include those things you like most and those things you think someone else would like.

- Develop a sense of history by asking questions such as, "What was it like in the good old days?" Explore family history and visit nearby historic places. Make comparisons between the present and the past. Plan to interview grandparents or some older people in the neighborhood about their childhood and what life was like as they were growing up. Before you interview, think about some good questions and write them down. After your interview, you may wish to share what you have learned with your family. Interviews which are tape recorded will likely be cherished in future years.

- With your parents' help, make a diagram for a family tree on a large piece of paper or cardboard. Write your name and birth date on the family tree, then write the names and birth dates of your brothers, sisters, and parents. Gather all the information you can find on your grandparents, great grandparents, or other ancestors. Your parents or grandparents may have photographs or family albums with information to help you fill in your family tree. Go back into history as far as possible to learn about your ancestors.

NOTE TO PARENTS:

> Communication skills which include listening, speaking, reading, and writing are basic to all learning. Using language helps your child make sense of the world. There are many valuable opportunities in everyday living which you may utilize to help your child grow in the ability to communicate. Listening and speaking are important life skills that enable your child to exchange information and to share feelings and ideas. You can help your child build good listening and speaking habits by listening carefully yourself and by encouraging questions from your child.

Activities for children:

- Ask someone in your family to read a story or a poem to you. Close your eyes as you listen. Let your imagination paint a picture of the place and the action for the story or poem. Draw the picture. Then tell another family member about the picture and the story.

- Think of how you would introduce yourself to a new child in the neighborhood. Practice your introduction.

  Introduce a friend to one of your parents. Later, ask your parents if you made the introduction correctly.

- Write several beginning ideas for a two-minute impromptu speech, each on a separate card. Following are some examples:

  If I were twenty years older...
  If it snowed every day...
  If I lived on the moon...

If I were the best hockey player in the world...
If I were President...
If I were a dog...

Put the cards in a box, mix them up, and draw one. Ask one of your parents to listen to your speech about the topic.

- Listen to a story read by someone in your family. Afterward, retell only the important parts of the story. Ask your family if you summarized the story.

- With a member of your family role-play conversations between two people. Here are some you might try:

  - An old sea captain talking with a boy who loves adventure
  - A new neighbor visiting with one of your parents
  - Two people debating whether or not a bicycle park should be built in their neighborhood
  - A meeting between an earthling and an alien

- Pretend to be a person from a story or a TV show, or from a real-life experience. How does the person speak and move? Act out the person for your family. Afterward discuss your speaking and acting and tell what you did that represented the person.

- Discuss how you should answer your home telephone. Ask how you should make an emergency phone call. Without using the telephone, practice what you would say if you were calling the fire department, rescue squad, or police department. Ask if your "call" was done correctly.

NOTE TO PARENTS:

The above material was adapted from A Handbook for Parents of Young School Children and the Handbook for Parents of Elementary School Children published by Fairfax County Public Schools, Fairfax, Virginia. These two handbooks, one about the younger child ages 4 through 7 years, and one about the child ages 8, 9 and 10 years, have been designed to assist the parent, the child's most important teacher. These booklets help children learn at home in ways that supplement and reinforce what they learn at school.

Both handbooks stress the fact that children will differ in the ages at which they enjoy and benefit from the activities suggested because of the great variance in rate of growth and development of the children.* The appropriateness of some activities will also be determined by children's interests. Copies of these handbooks are available through your school.

*The following section suggests some general developmental characteristics of children.

SECTION V

EVEN THOUGH CHILDREN VARY IN THEIR RATE OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT WHAT ARE SOME GENERAL DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN?

Some Developmental Characteristics of Children

3-4 Years

Works and plays with other children
- Has short-lived friendships
- Engages in parallel play with beginning of cooperative play (boys and girls play together)
- Begins to feel concern for others' feelings; is aware of attitudes of peers
- Enjoys new people and experiences
- Is aware of racial differences
- May have imaginary playmates

Prepares for school
- Needs positive preschool experiences

Develops emotionally
- Begins to exert self-control; can tolerate some frustrations
- Becomes more flexible and accepting of alternatives
- Likes surprises and unusual stimuli
- Begins to show a sense of humor
- Requires adult support in developing autonomy
- Needs to give and receive overt affection
- Fears the dark, being left alone, strange situations

Develops a sense of values
- Learns values and roles from available adult models
- Begins to learn to distinguish between right and wrong
- Begins to learn to separate from parents and function independently

Develops a sense of self
- Is aware of self as a separate person, and contrasts self with others
- Has strong preferences
- Shows pride in achievement
- Begins to understand concept of ownership
- Is aware of sex differences
- Desires independence and is capable of some independent activity
- Explores, approaching each new experience as a challenge

Begins to develop thinking skills
- Makes little differentiation of fantasy from reality
- Has short attention span
- Can name many objects; groups objects which look alike or have similar functions
- May use numbers without understanding concept of quantity
- Makes judgments hastily, with many mistakes
- Can make a choice between two alternatives
- Relates recent experiences with some understanding of sequence
- Can follow instructions if not more than two ideas are involved
- May have limited recall
- More likely remembers emotionally significant events

Begins to develop language skills
- May differ from others in language usage; is more fluent if accepted
- Uses some functional abstract words (for example; up, down, now)
- Increases vocabulary at a rapid pace; enjoys talking, can say full name
- Uses 4-6 word sentences with advancing sentence structure
- Begins to use words to express feelings
- Makes frequent repetitions of sounds and words

3-4 Years (continued)

Develops physically
- Gains increasing skill in large muscle coordination (girls ahead of boys)
- Needs opportunities and independence for physical activity and exploration
- Increases in speed, coordination, and motor skills
- Has high physical energy level
- Dresses and undresses self
- Walks up and down stairs-alternating feet each step

5-7 Years

Works and plays with other children
- Respects others' options
- Responds well to criticism
- Has friends
- Handles short-lived quarrels well
- Shares and takes turns
- Participates in organized games requiring coordinated efforts
- Begins to conform to peer standards while still seeking adult guidance

Adjust to school
- Seeks teacher affection and approval
- Has positive attitudes toward learning
- Participates eagerly in school experiences
- Responds to teacher's social attitudes and values

Develops emotionally
- Expresses feelings freely (often to extreme form)
- Accepts separation from parents
- Needs adult reassurance of competence and basic worth
- Begins to inhibit aggression
- Needs assurance of being loved
- Expresses a sense of humor (riddles, practical jokes, and nonsense words)

Develops a sense of values
- Has a sense of duty and accomplishment
- Shows evidence of conscience
- Accepts rules, but does not understand principles behind them

Develops a sense of self
- Clarifies differences between adults' and children's worlds
- Achieves independence in physical self care
- Gains practical knowledge necessary for everyday living
- Explores for a purpose
- Learns to forego immediate reward for delayed gratification

Develops thinking skills
- Differentiates more clearly between fantasy and reality
- Shows lengthened attention span; has ability to shift attention
- Has concepts which are largely functional
- Orders objects by dimension of size and quantity
- Has good memory for concrete sequences (memory for information enhanced when information is presented in a meaningful context)
- Applies more thought to judgments and decisions

5-7 Years (continued)

Develops language skills
- Learns that words and pictures represent real objects
- Relates tales of present and past events
- Has vocabulary comprehension that is mostly concrete (words represent objects and activities)
- Understands language better than uses language
- May use language aggressively
- Verbalizes similarities and analogies

Develops physically (girls usually ahead of boys)
- Shows evidence of small muscle and eye-hand coordination
- Becomes increasingly skillful in handling tools and materials
- Can draw a recognizable human figure
- Has a continued high-energy level
- Masters physical skills necessary for game playing
- Is ready for beginning reading
- Places importance upon physical skills in influencing status among peers and in developing a positive self-concept

8-10 Years

Works and plays with other children
- Is concerned with peer-imposed rules (rules which may be shifting)
- Shares with peers sexual information and misinformation
- Competes with others, sometimes with considerable boasting
- Has frequent quarrels (as a result of antagonism between boys and girls)
- Forms cliques of the same sex
- Expends extreme energy in physical game playing, particularly with peers of the same sex
- Becomes interested in hobbies
- Is influenced by peer groups

Becomes more adjusted to school
- May have difficulty in handling failure experiences (as a result of heightened competitiveness in school activities)
- Shows continuing need for teacher approval and affection
- Is increasingly able and interested in assuming responsibilities

Develops emotionally
- Reacts to feelings of others positively and/or negatively
- Is sensitive to criticism and ridicule
- Seeks a warm, friendly relationship with adults
- Shows evidence of worries, revolving around self-esteem and threats to security

Develops a sense of values
- Tests and questions attitudes, values, and belief systems (which may result in conflict)
- Takes strong cues from adult role models about acceptable behavior
- Understands the reasons for rules and behaves according to them
- Begins to make value judgments about own behavior, sets standards for self; accepts responsibility for behavior
- Develops a sense of self
- Conforms to sex role
- Achieves personal independence

Social Development Within the Family

3-4 Years

- Is provided sex role models by parents
- Derives self-esteem and sense of security primarily from parental attitudes
- Needs adult direction for physical safety
- Learns family expectations with regard to control of aggression, achievement, degree of independence
- Is able to express caring behavior toward others
- Is interested in and able to do small chores around the home
- Begins to learn to take direction and follow rules
- Is energetic to the point of adult exhaustion
- Tests limits set by others
- Begins to have strong feelings for family and home

5-7 Years

- Has expectancies for sex roles as communicated by parents (These expectancies may or may not be typical.)
- Faces many new demands upon entering school; e.g., the ability to function independently is severely tested

8-10 Years

- Is influenced in school achievement through parental guidance and support
- Expands interests and activities outside the home (Parent commitment and involvement play an important role in this expansion.)
- Is assisted by parents in assuming personal and social responsibility

11-13 Years

- Needs opportunity to make decisions
- Is influenced less by parents on behavior outside the home
- Needs parents for development of values (Child's occasional negativism or rebellion does not diminish the importance of parents for this development.)

These characteristics were adapted from the ASCD chart "Developmental Characteristics of Children and Youth."

TEACHER
SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THE
PARENT LETTER

The attached letter to parents may be reproduced on your school's stationery and used as a cover letter to accompany Individual Skills Profiles for the Program of Studies Test Score Report. Use of this letter is optional; it is provided as a convenience for teachers and principals in MET field test schools.

The letter encourages parents to schedule a conference to discuss their child's test results. As you plan for the conference, it may be helpful to anticipate some of the questions parents may have. The following are typical questions parents have asked about POS tests:

- Does the grade level of the test have anything to do with my child's grade level placement or reading and math group placement?
- How do POS test results fit in with other indicators of my child's progress in school, for example, daily classroom performance, scores on SRA tests, report card grades, interest, motivation?
- If my child is weak in particular skills, what kind of help will he or she get? Will my child receive enrichment in strong areas?
- What can I do to help my child at home?

Sources of additional testing information for parents include the following:

- "Suggestions for Parents" located in the Principal/Teacher Resources section of the Management Support Kit.
- FCPS Familygram (special edition on testing), Spring 1982.
- Principal of the school.
- Testing personnel in the Department of Research and Evaluation.

MET
Management for Effective Teaching

FAIRFAX COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dear

Attached are the results of your child's Program of Studies (POS) test. The following information about POS testing will be helpful to you in understanding the results.

Purposes of POS Tests

The POS tests measure achievement of selected objectives from the Fairfax County curriculum as outlined in the Program of Studies. There are currently POS tests available for objectives in math (grades 3-8), and reading (grades 2-7).

The Program of Studies Tests are given to provide information about many of the important basic skills which your child must learn. POS tests measure only a sample of skills, as it is impossible to measure everything your child learns in school. Also, some important skills, such as writing legibly or assuming responsibility, cannot be measured by the test questions on the POS tests.

Using the Results

POS tests may be given to your child at any time of the school year, or several times during the year if there is a need. The attached individual skills profile is a computerized score report of POS test results. It includes the date, name, and grade level of POS tests recently administered to your child. As you may have noticed, there are no numerical scores or totals for the POS tests. The test results simply tell how your child is performing on selected skills. They do not compare your child's performance with that of other children nor do they result in a composite score.

The tests can identify what skills your child already knows, what skills are still being mastered, and what skills your child will be learning. This information is useful in planning teaching throughout the year to better meet the instructional needs of every child in the class.

I hope this information on POS testing will be helpful as we work together for your child's progress. After you review your child's individual skills profile, you may wish to discuss it. Please let me know if you would like to schedule a conference.

Sincerely yours,